

Young Families

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A family-focused newsletter with young children in mind

Classify Foods to Help Make Healthy Choices

One way to help children (2 years of age or older) understand the health benefits associated with food items is to classify foods into three categories: GO Foods, SLOW Foods, and WHOA Foods. GO Foods can be eaten almost anytime because they are the healthiest. SLOW Foods should not be eaten every day because they are not as healthy as GO Foods and may contain more fat and/or calories. WHOA Foods are the least healthy and contain the most fat and/or calories. WHOA Foods should be eaten only once in a while or for special treats. Below is a chart of some GO, SLOW, and WHOA foods.

Food Group	GO (Almost Anytime)	SLOW (Sometimes)	WHOA (Once in a While)
Vegetables	Almost all fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables without added fat and sauces	All vegetables in added fat or salt; oven-baked fries; avocados	Deep-fried vegetables such as French fries or hash browns
Fruits	All fresh, frozen, and canned (in juice) fruits	100% fruit juice; fruits canned in light syrup; dried fruits	Fruits canned in heavy syrup
Breads and Cereals	Whole-grain breads, pita bread; tortillas and pasta; brown rice; hot and cold unsweetened whole grain breakfast cereals	White refined flour bread, rice, and pasta. French toast; taco shells; cornbread; biscuits; granola; waffles and pancakes	Croissants; muffins; sweet rolls; doughnuts; crackers made with trans fats; sweetened breakfast cereals
Milk and Milk Products	Fat-free or 1 percent reduced-fat milk; fat-free or low-fat yogurt; part skim, reduced fat, and fat-free cheese	2 percent low-fat milk; processed cheese spread	Whole milk; full-fat American, cheddar, Colby, Swiss, cream cheese; whole-milk yogurt
Meats and Other Sources of Protein	Trimmed beef and pork; extra lean ground beef; chicken and turkey without skin; baked, broiled, steamed, grilled fish and shellfish; tuna canned in water; beans, split peas, lentils, tofu; egg whites and egg substitutes	Lean ground beef, broiled hamburgers; ham, Canadian bacon; chicken and turkey with skin; low-fat hot dogs; tuna canned in oil; peanut butter; nuts; whole eggs cooked without added fat	Untrimmed beef and pork; regular ground beef; fried hamburgers; ribs; bacon; fried chicken, chicken nuggets; hot dogs, lunch meats, pepperoni, sausage; fried fish and shellfish; whole eggs cooked with fat
Sweets and Snacks*	Ice milk bars; frozen fruit juice bars; low-fat frozen yogurt and ice-cream; fig bars, ginger snaps, baked chips; low-fat microwave popcorn; pretzels		Cookies and cakes; pies; cheese cake; ice cream; chocolate; candy; chips; buttered microwave popcorn
Fats	Vinegar; ketchup; mustard; fat-free creamy salad dressing; fat-free mayonnaise; fat free sour cream, Vegetable oil, olive oil and low-fat, oil-based salad dressing**	creamy salad dressing; low-fat mayonnaise; low-fat sour cream	Butter, margarine; lard; salt pork; gravy; regular creamy salad dressing; mayonnaise; tartar sauce; sour cream; cheese sauce; cream sauce; cream cheese dips
Beverages	Water, fat-free milk or 1 percent reduced-fat milk; diet soda; diet iced teas and lemonade	2 percent low-fat milk; 100 percent fruit juice; sports drinks	Whole milk; regular soda; sweetened iced teas and lemonade; fruit drinks with less than 100 percent fruit juice

*Some foods in this row are lower in fat and calories, but all sweets and snacks need to be limited in order to not go over one's daily calorie needs. **Vegetable and olive oils contain no saturated or trans fats and can be consumed daily, but in limited portions to not go over one's daily calorie needs.

Chart source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>

Vary the Veggies in Family Meals

Are vegetables viewed as a family favorite at your house? If you answered with a “well, not really,” you are not alone. While vegetables may miss the “most popular” list, they have so much to offer it is worth our while to find delicious veggie variations. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans urges us to select from all five vegetable subgroups – namely, dark green, orange, legumes (dried peas and beans), starchy vegetables, and others – several times each week.

Vegetables supply us with vitamins A and C, folate, potassium, magnesium and fiber. Dark green and

dark yellow vegetables are great sources of vitamin A, which promotes good vision and healthy skin.

Both children and adults need vegetables every day because they add many different vitamins and minerals, as well as exciting colors, flavors, and textures to our meals. They are naturally low in fat and high in fiber and taste. Hot or cold, they are popular in many forms – from juice to dessert.

While all vegetables count toward the three to five servings we need each day, some choices are naturals

for the “healthful top 10” list. These include broccoli, cabbage, carrots, green beans and peas, leafy greens, and summer and winter squash. These colorful winners offer lots of healthful nutrients and few calories.

Need some child-friendly vegetable recipes for your family meals? Visit the Kids a Cookin’ Web site www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu and click on recipes. Go to veggies, and let the variety begin.

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Help Guide Kids Through Money Decisions

Managing money successfully usually is a learned skill, and children can learn from parents who budget carefully.

For example, parents could establish a reasonable budget for school clothes then discuss with each child what this amount is expected to buy such as five shirts, four pairs of jeans, a coat, and a pair of shoes).

If the child wants a more expensive pair of shoes than the budget allows, the parent has the opportunity to guide the child through the decision-making process of either saving money, waiting for the shoes to go on sale, or buying something less expensive. Let the child choose and learn to live with his or her decision.

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Teach Children Label-Reading Basics

If you want your children to eat smart, one of the most important skills you can teach them is how to read food labels. For example, let a child prepare his preferred-size serving of pretzels, cereal, cookies or fruit juice. Then show the child where the serving size is listed on the food container’s label. Use measuring cups to measure the amount in the serving size shown on the label and compare that with the child’s usual serving.

Older children also can test their math skills with label information. An interesting place to start may be the grams of sugar in a label-specified serving. Four grams equal one teaspoon. If a cereal serving has 12 grams of sugar, divide that by four. Your answer will be 3 teaspoons or 1 tablespoon of sugar PER serving.

Eating a variety of food is important for growth and good nutrition. Important nutrients for kids include protein for growth, calcium for strong bones and teeth, iron for healthy blood, vitamin A for good eyes, and vitamin C to help heal cuts and scrapes.

For more nutrition tips and kid-friendly recipes for the whole family, visit the Kids a Cookin’ Web site at www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu.

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